Homeless Children in the School Nutrition Programs

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McKinney-Vento Homeless Act 2002

- (Title X of NCLB) Amended in January 2002
 - Clarified definition of homeless children and youth
 - Required districts to designate homeless liaison

To expedite delivery of nutritional benefits..

School officials may accept documentation from:

- homeless liaison
- director of a shelter or transitional housing project where children resides

Documentation of free meal eligibility must consist of:

- A completed meal application or
- Letter from homeless liaison or director of a shelter or transitional housing project where the child resides

Meal Application

Homeless liaison will complete the application on the child's behalf

Identify on application – Homeless

Sign the application and indicate "Homeless Liaison"

Letter/list from homeless liaison or shelter official

- Name of child or children involved
- Effective date of eligibility
- Signature of Homeless Liaison or Director of Shelter

Homeless child/family residing with another household/host family

Homeless child residing with another household/host family

 A child or family may temporarily reside with another household/host family and still be considered homeless under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Homeless child residing with another household/host family

• In these cases, the household size and income of the household/host family is not taken into consideration in determining the free meal eligibility for the child(ren) designated as homeless by homeless liaison.

Can the household/host family apply for meal benefits for their own children?

Yes, the household/host family may, if it chooses:

 include the homeless family as household members if the household/host family provides financial support to the homeless family, such as shelter, utilities, clothing or food;

AND

Can the household/host family apply for meal benefits for their own children?

 if household/host family includes the homeless family as household members then household/host family must include any income received by the homeless family

Determining eligibility of household/host family

 School officials must determine eligibility for the household/host family in traditional manner using total household members and income from all sources.

Determining eligibility of homeless child on household/host family's application

 Free meal eligibility for the homeless child(ren) is based on the documentation from homeless liaison, even when the child is included on the household/host family's free and reduced price meal application

Determining Eligibility

- If the household/host family meets eligibility guidelines school officials should provide the household/host family with temporary approval for benefits.
- The host's family eligibility should be re-evaluated when their household size decreases, i.e., the homeless family leaves.

Homeless Liaison reminders..

- Update list when change occurs and notify food service and/or school official (Date child left school or no longer homeless)
- The determination of the child as "homeless" continues until the child has moved out of the district or the homeless liaison terminates the designation of "homeless" for the child

Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004

- Amended the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to make runaway, homeless and migrant children categorically eligible for free meal benefits
- Established requirement for documenting a child's status as runaway, homeless, or migratory

For Assistance

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